IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with <u>underlining</u> and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 5 and 9, AND ADD new claims 10-14 in accordance with the following:

1.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A design data processing method of processing hierarchically configured design data, comprising:

obtaining first design data of a lower rank of hierarchy;

obtaining second design data of a rank of hierarchy higher than the lower rank of hierarchy, after ~~the~~ obtaining the first design data; and

combining the second design data to the first design data<u>, where when the first design data of the lower rank of hierarchy is modified after the second design data is created, the second design data is displayed together with the first design data of the lower rank of hierarchy, and</u>

<u>wherein the hierarchy comprises a physical hierarchy including a plurality of ranks having different physical heights</u>.

2-4.   (CANCELLED)

5.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable recording medium storing a software program for processing hierarchically configured design data, which when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform operations comprising:

obtaining first design data of a lower rank of hierarchy;

obtaining second design data of a rank of hierarchy higher than the lower rank of hierarchy, after ~~the~~ obtaining the first design data; and

combining the second design data to the first design data<u>, where when the first design data of the lower rank of hierarchy is modified after the second design data is created, the second design data is displayed together with the first design data of the lower rank of hierarchy and</u>

<u>wherein the hierarchy comprises a physical hierarchy including a plurality of ranks</u>

having different physical heights.

6-8.   (CANCELLED)

9.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of designing a hierarchical layout of a circuit, comprising:

receiving a designation of a lower rank from a user;

retrieving design data of the lower rank from a storage unit;

retrieving wiring data of an upper rank from the storage unit, after the retrieving the design data;

setting the wiring data in the design data; and

displaying the design data in which the wiring data has been set on a display unit, where when the design data of the lower rank is modified after the wiring data of the upper rank, the wiring data of the upper rank is displayed together with the design data of the lower rank, and

wherein the design data has hierarchical data having a physical hierarchy including a plurality of ranks having different physical heights.

10.   (NEW) A method of designing a hierarchical layout of a large scale integrated circuit, comprising:

acquiring design data of a specified rank of the hierarchical layout of the large scale integrated circuit;

acquiring wiring data of a rank of the hierarchical layout higher than the specified rank of the hierarchical layout; and

setting and displaying the wiring data in the design data of the specified rank, where when the design data of the specified rank is modified after the wiring data of the rank of the hierarchical layout higher than the specified rank, the wiring data of the rank of the hierarchical layout higher than the specified rank is displayed together with the design data of the specified rank.

11.   (NEW) A method of processing hierarchically configured design data, comprising:

setting and displaying wiring data of a higher rank of the hierarchically configured design data in a design data of a lower rank of the hierarchically configured design data, where when the design data of the lower rank is modified after the wiring data of the higher rank, the wiring data of the higher rank is displayed together with the design data of the specified rank.

12. (NEW) A design data processing method of processing hierarchically configured design data, comprising:

obtaining first design data of a lower rank of hierarchy;

obtaining second design data of a rank of hierarchy higher than the lower rank of hierarchy, after obtaining the first design data; and

combining the second design data to the first design data, where the hierarchy comprises a physical hierarchy including a plurality of ranks having different physical heights.

13. (NEW) A computer readable recording medium storing a software program for processing hierarchically configured design data, which when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform operations comprising:

obtaining first design data of a lower rank of hierarchy;

obtaining second design data of a rank of hierarchy higher than the lower rank of hierarchy, after obtaining the first design data; and

combining the second design data to the first design data, where the hierarchy comprises a physical hierarchy including a plurality of ranks having different physical heights.

14. (NEW) A method of designing a hierarchical layout of a circuit, comprising:

receiving a designation of a lower rank from a user and retrieving design data of the lower rank from a storage unit;

retrieving wiring data of an upper rank from the storage unit, after retrieving the design data;

setting the wiring data in the design data; and

displaying the design data in which the wiring data has been set on a display unit, where the displayed data having the wiring data set comprises a physical hierarchy including a plurality of ranks having different physical heights.